

# **HIGHWATER**

## **DNRC Floodplain Management Program**

*A publication of the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation Floodplain Management Program*

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### **Greetings!**

I have been working in the floodplain management arena for over 13 years now. It is hard to believe it has been that long. Every time I get the notion for a career change, I get a new challenge that I want to see accomplished before I move on. Well, there have been a number of challenges recently. The biggest yet to be accomplished is that I'm still working on improving this program and it's ability to provide a positive benefit to all residents of this state. Budget constraints have been a nightmare, and my most recent hit was the retirement of Rick Bondy, P.E. and the elimination of his position by the Department. Rick was the P.E. for the Floodplain Program. Many of you knew Rick and have worked with him in one capacity or another. Rick's assets were that he was always fair, always listened to both sides of the fence, and would share his knowledge and skills anywhere he could, plus the fact he helped me out quite a bit on the tough issues.

Budgets are short and getting shorter, while the demand for assistance is getting higher. It now takes me at least a month to get written responses and reviews completed, and sometimes longer if I'm out of the office much. Please keep this in mind when it seems like it takes forever to get something out of Helena.... because it does!!



Karl Christians, CFM  
DNRC Floodplain Program Manager

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### **ASSOCIATION OF MONTANA FLOODPLAIN MANAGERS 5TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE BIG SKY RESORT 2004**

You asked for it and you got it. Join the AMFM at the Huntley Lodge (406-995-5000), **Big Sky Resort, April 5-7** for what is shaping up to be our best conference ever. This year's conference will cover a variety of topics that will include training on the topic of "takings", community and personal liability, and case studies and forums on

relevant floodplain management issues around the state. Plus, don't forget our famous opening night mixer and kickoff presentations.

The AMFM has obtained state rates from the resort so those on state travel per diem can attend with little hardship. Further, the resort has offered AMFM members and attendees discounted ski lift tickets. So, think about bringing the family, staying an extra night and doing some up close and personal snow pack assessments! (Yes, the chairs are still running that week!)

A Call for Abstracts has been sent out. If you wish to present, please submit an abstract by February 7<sup>th</sup>!!

Also, the AMFM is in the process of developing a website. The address is [www.mtfloods.org](http://www.mtfloods.org). Be sure to bookmark this site, for it should improve weekly and be helpful to all who are in the world of floodplain management. If there are things you would like to see on this site, please email them to [mtfloods@mtfloods.org](mailto:mtfloods@mtfloods.org).

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## **New FEMA Region 8 State Specialist.**

Fred Metzler retired from many years of service with FEMA, and now Montana has a new FEMA state specialist. Her name is Marijo Camrud, P.E., C.F.M.

Marijo joined the FEMA Region VIII in October 2002. Following graduation from the Colorado School of Mines, she has worked in a variety of engineering and managerial capacities for both private companies and federal agencies. Her first experience with FEMA was completing flood insurance studies while working for the Tulsa District Corps of Engineers. From Tulsa she joined the Bureau of Reclamation in Denver working on extreme hydrologic event forecasting. With FEMA, she is responsible for administering the NFIP for the state of Montana and is the regional engineer for new mapping projects in the states of Colorado, Montana, and Wyoming. Marijo is familiar with and well traveled in the great state of Montana, as her husband is a Montana native from Billings. She looks forward to working with Karl Christians, Larry Akers, and local floodplain managers. She can be reached at 303-235-4835 in Denver or by email at [marijo.camrud@fema.gov](mailto:marijo.camrud@fema.gov).

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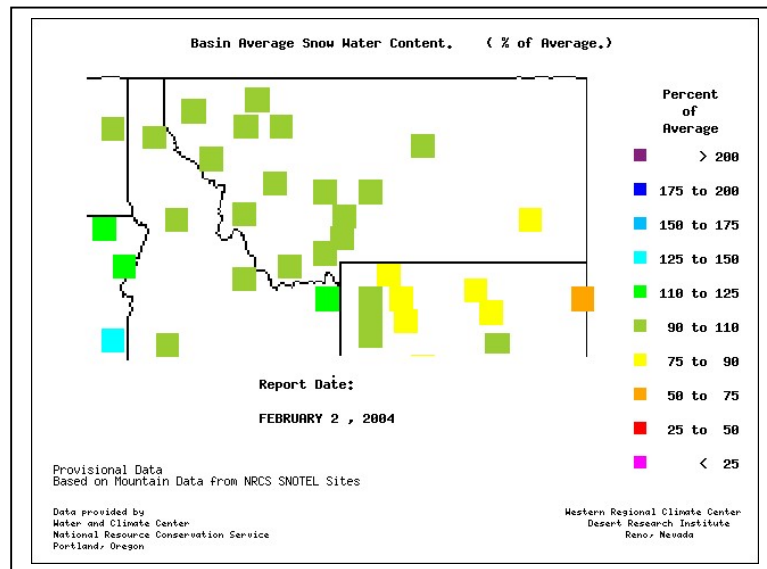
## **What's New in the World of Floodplain's???**

The last few years has really shown an increase in demand on floodplain development in the western part of the state. That "Last Best Place" mentality has kicked in. With that comes the pressure to develop in the floodplain and as close to the river as possible. This has made for a challenging few years. It's not so much the actually buildings per se, but the fine line of drawing that exact floodplain boundary to meet sanitary restrictions is what is making things difficult. As most of you know, sanitation restrictions are such that a septic system drain field cannot be located within 100 horizontal feet of the 100-year floodplain. With developers wanting to be

as close to the river as possible, drawing that definitive line can be very complicated on some river systems.

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## SNOW PACKS ARE LOOKING GOOD!!



The snow packs are looking good as far as moisture levels. They are near normal to slightly above normal, yet not high enough to really cause a concern for major flooding... except the northeastern part of the state. The snowstorm around Christmas dumped a lot of moisture in that area, and it has not moved yet. If it comes off in a hurry, there will be some flooding. Homeowners in this part of the state should consider flood insurance now, for there is a thirty-day waiting period.

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## Biennial Reports.

FEMA HQ has announced that all NFIP participating communities will be receiving their 2003 Biennial Report within the next two weeks. The Biennial Report asks communities basic information about the level of development in their floodplains and their mapping needs for the years of 2001 and 2002.

The 2003 Biennial will be significantly different than previous years. Unlike the previous versions of the Biennial Report, which were a multi-paged carbon form, the 2003 Biennial will provide communities an option of replying online, faxing or phoning in their responses. Communities will receive an envelope containing a short cover letter, a one-page Biennial Report form and an informational flyer. Detailed instructions on replying to the Biennial are provided with each mailing. An additional element of the 2003 Biennial is an expanded level of attention given to our efforts to obtain information from communities about their map update needs. This added effort is to directly support the Five-Year Mapping Needs Assessment initiative and the Map Modernization initiative in general.

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## **Certified Floodplain Manager (CFM) Program.**

The Association of State Floodplain Managers has established a national program for professional certification of floodplain managers. The program recognizes continuing education and professional development that enhance the knowledge and performance of local, state, federal, and private-sector floodplain managers.

The role of the nation's floodplain managers is expanding due to increases in disaster losses, the emphasis being placed upon mitigation to alleviate the cycle of damage-rebuild-damage, and a recognized need for professionals to adequately address these issues. Floodplain managers come from a variety of curricula and backgrounds; there is no college-level degree program for floodplain management. This certification program will lay the foundation for ensuring that highly qualified individuals are available to meet the challenge of breaking the damage cycle and stopping its negative drain on the nation's human, financial, and natural resources.

The primary goal of the ASFPM Certified Floodplain Manager Program (CFM Program) is to help reduce the nation's flood losses and protect and enhance the natural and beneficial functions of its floodplains by improving the knowledge and abilities of floodplain managers in the United States. This goal will be achieved over time by:

- ❑ Encouraging self-study and attendance at training courses by requiring testing to obtain certification;
- ❑ Requiring continuing education as a condition for re-certification; and
- ❑ Encouraging ASFPM chapters, state agencies, and state or regional associations to certify floodplain managers based on specific knowledge of state and regional requirements and legislation.
- ❑ Ensuring that CFM's have an awareness not only of the NFIP, but of comprehensive floodplain management

A second goal of the CFM Program is to increase the prominence of floodplain management in decision-making by local officials and the public. This goal will be achieved on a larger scale and over a longer time frame by:

- ❑ Improving the recognition of floodplain management as a specific discipline;
- ❑ Increasing the status of floodplain managers as knowledgeable professionals in a complex and important field;
- ❑ Providing greater credibility and visibility for the profession;
- ❑ Increasing the educational and training opportunities for floodplain managers through partnerships with other organizations, and

Local officials and consultants may want to consider taking the certification exam. Once again, it's a nationally recognized certification. To learn more about this Certification, please visit this site: [www.floods.org/Certification/certprog.asp](http://www.floods.org/Certification/certprog.asp).

On a side note, the Association of Montana Floodplain Managers (AMFM) has a goal of developing its own state certification program in the future. The exam dates will be scheduled soon. Check this site (currently being constructed) [www.mtfloods.org](http://www.mtfloods.org) for updates on the CFM exam dates in Montana.

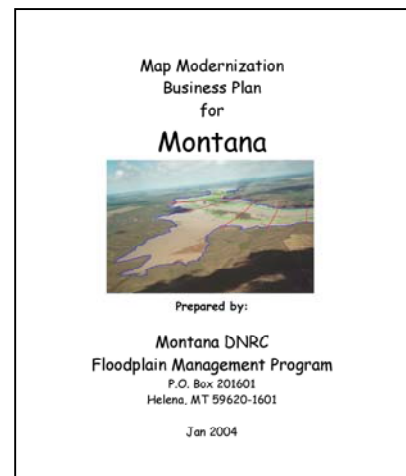
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## Montana Business Plan

The DNRC floodplain program has been tasked with developing a state Map Modernization Business Plan for FEMA. This funding is being made available for states that want to have a larger role in implementing Multi-Hazard Flood Map Modernization. The Business plan will be completed by mid March.

The ultimate goal is devolving floodplain mapping to State/local entities with interest and capability. All endeavors connected with FEMA's Multi-Hazard Flood Map Modernization, including the efforts of states and localities, must contribute to achieving the following objectives:

1. *Establish and maintain a premier data collection and delivery system:* Create a premier, geo-spatial system that provides easy access to reliable flood hazard data and other information and hazard data to support risk management applications and operations.
2. *Achieve effective program management:* Develop and provide a continually improving program management structure that motivates partners to share responsibilities and aligns partner missions to reduce the nation's vulnerability to flood and other hazards.
3. *Build and maintain mutually beneficial partnerships:* Foster mutually beneficial partnerships that achieve shared outcomes through the communication of flood risk and other hazard information and improve the systems that support them. Partnerships will result in enhanced delivery of risk management applications and operations.
4. *Expand and better inform the user community:* Foster public and stakeholder understanding of where to obtain flood and other hazard data and how to use and analyze it in order to make sound decisions to reduce their vulnerability to natural, and man made hazards.



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## **Flood Mitigation Assistance Program** (Tom Sanburg, FMA Coordinator)

### Project Grants:

The FEMA Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) program has undergone several important changes in the past year. FEMA now requires that mitigation projects must be designed to protect or mitigate flood losses to repetitive loss properties. A property owner must have received multiple flood insurance claims in order for the property to be registered on FEMA's repetitive loss list. A new nation-wide competitive process has been started. If a



community wants to apply for a FMA Project Grant, an electronic application will be submitted by the state. This project will be compared to others from other states and the money will be granted according to the project's ranking. Nationally, millions of dollars are available for flood mitigation projects. Montana has few prospects of securing project grants because few repetitive loss property owners are interested in paying the 25% in matching funds required. We have not had a significant flood for several years and interest has been lost.

### Planning Grants:

FEMA has required counties to complete multi-hazard mitigation plans. These plans are not funded by the Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) program, however such plans should include a section about flood hazard mitigation. Currently, Montana has approximately \$10,000 available for writing flood mitigation plans. It may be possible for some of this money to be used in developing the flood hazard section of a county's multi-hazard mitigation plan.

For more information, please call Tom at 406-444-9362 or email [tosanburg@state.mt.us](mailto:tosanburg@state.mt.us).

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## **Dates to mark on the calendar:**

**April 5-7, 2004 - Association of Montana Floodplain Managers Conference. Big Sky Resort, Big Sky MT. [www.mtfloods.org](http://www.mtfloods.org)**

**May 16-21, 2004, ASFPM's 28th annual conference "Lighting the Way to Floodplain Management", at the Central Gulf Coast. [www.floods.org](http://www.floods.org)**

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